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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7070
INFO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY 1438
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2969
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5096
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 3477
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 3950
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0218

UNCLAS HONG KONG 000422

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/STC EKANE
USDA FOR FAS/OCRA/MPOOL
BEIJING FOR AG COUNSELOR
TOKYO FOR AG COUNSELOR
SEOUL FOR AG COUNSELOR
HANOI FOR AG ATTACHE
AIT FOR AG CHIEF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [KPAO](#) [HK](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM PROPOSAL: HONG KONG, FOOD SAFETY

Ref: STATE 10843

11. (U) The Consulate General Hong Kong is pleased to submit the following request for a Food Safety Expert under the 2009 Embassy Science Fellow Program (reftel). Such a Science Fellow would greatly assist the Hong Kong Government (HKG) strengthen and improve its food testing regime and ensure that both science and risk-based standards are set and implemented in a manner that prevents unnecessary disruptions in trade.

12. (SBU) Following a wave of public concern generated by a series of food safety scares over imported items from mainland China, the HKG put in place vigorous food safety surveillance programs and testing mechanisms. These programs resulted in the testing of more than 130,000 food samples in 2008 by the Government Laboratory, the primary food product testing laboratory of the HKG. The lab continues to expand its capability and as Hong Kong testing protocols become more stringent, U.S. food products are increasingly found to contain levels of preservatives and/or metals that exceed Hong Kong standards.

13. (SBU) This Department-sponsored Fellow would work with the Government Laboratory to strengthen the U.S.-Hong Kong relationship and improve understanding about the differences between our food testing regimes. The Fellow would also specifically assist in efforts to improve understanding of sampling and detection testing for Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). LMOs are a source of significant trade friction and the Hong Kong Legislative Council will consider new legislation regulating them this fall. The Embassy Science Fellow would be expected to provide advice on the establishment of clear guidelines for residue detection and testing procedures and standards for levels of preservatives, metals, and residual pesticide in food products. In addition, we hope the successful candidate could participate in public diplomacy and educational efforts aimed at raising support for science and risk-based standards.

14. (SBU) Logistical details for proposed Hong Kong Science Fellow:

- * Preferred timeframe: early fall to winter 2009
- * Proposed length: 4 - 6 weeks
- * Medical Clearance: N/A
- * Security Clearance: N/A
- * Commitment: post will provide housing, office and logistical and in-country travel support.
- * RSO Clearance: RSO has reviewed and cleared this proposal.

15. (U) Point of Contact in Consulate General Hong Kong:
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officer, Anita Katial, anital.katial@usda.gov.

DONOVAN